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ABSTRACT

A survey was developed and administered to local education agency directors of special education regarding the future role of state schools for students with sensory impairments. Questions touched upon resources/curriculum, supervision, evaluation, satellite programs, and non-typical deaf and visually handicapped students. Regarding schools for the deaf, respondents rated the following items as significant needs: outreach teacher visits, provision of media resources, program coordination assistance, student evaluation (particularly audiological evaluations), and services for multi-handicapped students. Results for schools for the visually impaired closely paralleled the survey results for the deaf, suggesting among other needs, the importance of schools for the visually impaired to provide vision evaluations, services for the visually impaired/multihandicapped students, and assistance in individualized education program development. (CL)

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STATE SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

A View from the Local Education Agency

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Abstract

Examinations of relevant variables within the placement and service have produced a list of attributes which should be part of the planning in state-operated residential schools for deaf and blind children. The present study made survey contact with a number of local education agencies. Questions were asked which appear to effectively assess the level of need in local school programs for various services which can be offered by state residential schools for sensorily impaired children. Results of the study indicate that some of these schools may need to consider modifying their delivery of services. The purpose of this study was to provide information for an integrated review.

The first school for the deaf was founded by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a pioneer in the education of the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. The first state-operated school for the visually handicapped was founded in Boston in 1832 by Samuel Gridley Howe. State-operated residential schools for deaf and blind students have had a long and enviable record in providing educational programming for those handicapped learners in the United States. These state-operated residential schools were founded to provide educational opportunities similar to those afforded to non-handicapped students.

Public law 94-142 has had a significant impact on the role of the local school district in delivering services to handicapped children. This law has had the effect of mandating services for all handicapped children, from mildly impaired students to the most severely impaired students. This law has also had an impact on state-operated residential schools.

The effect is less clear in the case of these residential schools due to the various government configurations, admissions standards, and the placement process used by local education agencies. In many cases the enrollment at the state-operated school has declined substantially. One cause for this decline can be traced to the elimination of prenatal disease (Rubella) and reduction in birth trauma (retrolental fibroplasia). Another important variable is the increased responsibility taken by local education agencies as a response to PL 94-142.

In order to offset the reduction in student enrollments and to maintain availability of these programs for sensorily impaired learners, it is important for these schools to attempt to modify their past role so as to more appropriately match themselves with the needs of local school districts. Within the study presented here are some important roles as defined by a group of local education agency directors of special education. An examination of the results of this study could assist the state education planning committees, governing boards, or residential school support groups in planning for the future roles and responsibilities attributable to these important educational programs.

Method

Item Development

The selection of items for the survey used in assessing the future role of state schools for the sensory impaired began with a meeting of local education agency directors of special education. A list of desired services was developed and a priority ranking was established. Further development of the listing was completed in a meeting of state education agency staff. The format was refined and split into dichotomous parts, with similar responses requested from those looking for services for deaf learners and those looking for services for visually handicapped learners.

Selection of Sample

The sample was selected from two groups. The first (N=50) was selected from the membership of the National Council of Administrators of Special Education, a CEC affiliate. The second was selected from a Nebraska Department of Education list of school districts with students enrolled in a state school for the sensory impaired (N=60).

Item Areas Represented

A survey was developed (see Appendix A) which chose to seek information in the following areas:

a. Resources/Curriculum Development - Should the state residential school develop a curricular scope and sequence to assist standardization of the basic program for deaf and visually handicapped children on a statewide basis?

b. Supervision - Can the state residential school provide a level of supervision to programs on a statewide basis? Do LEAs want such service?

c. Evaluation - Should the state-operated residential school offer evaluation services for deaf and visually handicapped students whether they are attending the state-operated residential school or not?

d. Satellite Programs - Should the state-operated residential schools develop, organize, and promolgate a system of centrally-operated and locally-based day programs for eligible sensory impaired students?

e. Non-Typical Deaf and Visually Handicapped Students - Should the state-operated residential school provide programs for those multiply involved students which are difficult to serve in local education agencies?

Under each of these topical headings, individual items were selected from the original list developed by local education agency special education administrators.

Analysis of Results

It was decided that analysis of the survey responses would include two distinct formats. The first was the percentage of response of all those responding to the survey and the second was a percentage of those responding positively to that section of the survey.

Results - Deaf

The results of the survey as applied to schools for the deaf provided significant information in a number of categories. This

information may be used in planning for the future role of the state school for the deaf as a part of a statewide delivery system for handicapped learners.

Resources/Curriculum

The respondents indicated under this area of survey that a number of items were of significant need (significance = 50%). Two items of the six in this section reached the 50% significance level. The first significant response was to outreach teacher visits. Outreach teacher visits are direct responses by instructional staff at the state-supported residential school to assist a local education agency in providing educational intervention to a sensorily impaired learner. Among respondents to the deaf survey, 56% of the respondents would like to receive outreach teacher visits. Sixty percent of those providing a positive response to this item wish to receive outreach teacher visits.

Another important item in this section is the desire to have the school for the deaf provide media resources. Fifty-four percent of all respondents wish to receive these services and 56% of those providing a positive response wish to receive these services. Parent education was the strongest area of need outlined in the survey responses. Sixty-three percent of all respondents wish to have the state school assist in the provision of parent education, while 66% of all positive respondents wish to receive that service. Local education agencies also wish to receive assistance in the purchasing of equipment and materials. Fifty-four percent of all respondents and 56% of positive respondents wanted the school to help with major purchases like classroom amplification devices and significant media

purchases. Other areas of strong concern included assistance in IEP development and help in developing a centralized curriculum. Single responses which might be worthy of further study included social activities provided on the campus of the state school, community awareness programs and adaptive services.

Supervision/Support

Local school districts as a whole appear to have less need or desire for supervision and support. Only one item in this area elicited a significant response. Fifty-six percent of those responding to the item wished to receive program coordination assistance. Other areas with some strength in the responses included program evaluation assistance, program location assistance and management of a statewide student data base. Another single response which might be worthy of further study was teacher inservice provided by the state school for the deaf.

Student Evaluation

There was a very strong level of support for the state school for the deaf to provide student evaluation. This could reflect the inability of local districts to hire appropriately trained evaluation staff. There was a substantial desire for psychological evaluation as indicated by a response of 62% of all responding to the survey and 71% of all positive responses in this area. The strongest area of need was for audiological evaluations. Seventy-four percent of all respondents and 86% of the positive respondents wished to receive this service. Educational evaluations were also a popular response area as 68% of all respondents and 79% of the positive

respondents wished to have an educational evaluation done by the state school. Another strong response was received in the area of behavioral evaluations where 54% of the positive respondents wished to receive this service. Another single item response which merits further study is vocational evaluations done at the state school.

Satellite Programs

Although discussed by the original committee as an important parameter of service delivery that could have important impact on both local school programs and residential schools, the satellite program concept did not gain strong support across the country, regardless of its operational standards. The highest level of support was for a 0-21 regional program based in remote parts of the largely rural western states.

Non-Typical/Multi-Handicapped

The strongest support of any of the survey areas was exhibited on behalf of the multi-handicapped. Programs for deaf/blind, deaf/mentally retarded, deaf/physically handicapped, deaf/emotionally disturbed, and deaf/learning disabled all received a very high level of support in the national sample. It was very clear that the multi-handicapped programs offered at the residential school would be a well-utilized program by local school districts. There was even some support for these issues on a regional basis.

Other Needs

Although not of the statistically significant level, a number of other needs were registered by the respondents to the survey. Sign language and interpreter training was one of the very popular

alternatives selected. Vocational education was also strongly represented in the data. Two other ideas were advanced that appear to have substantial merit. These were assistance in standardizing sign language/ASL training across the state and a program for school-to-work transition for the older hearing impaired.

Results - Blind

The results of the survey on behalf of the visually impaired closely paralleled the results of the survey for the deaf. There were some minor differences but the following results show what appears to be a striking resemblance between what is desired of a school for the deaf and of a school for the visually impaired.

Resources/Curriculum

Areas of significant support were outreach teacher visits where 64% of the respondents and 74% of the positive respondents wanted to receive the service. Other similar support services included media resources, 66% and 76% respectively; the assistance in IEP development, 50% and 57% respectively; and parent education, 58% and 67% respectively. In addition local education agencies desired assistance in purchasing equipment and materials, particularly those of a specialized nature.

Supervision/Support

Local school districts requested that consideration be given to the development of program evaluation assistance. Fifty-two percent of those responding and 78% of those responding positively appeared to support this area. In addition there was substantial support for program coordination assistance, management of a state-

wide student data base, and program location assistance. Another limited response that appeared to have merit for further study was the development of teacher inservice for local school districts.

Student Evaluation

The results of the survey indicated that 56% of the respondents and 67% of those who responded positively would like the school for the visually impaired to provide vision evaluations. They also desired educational evaluations as demonstrated by 58% and 70% response rates. One area that appeared to be in need of further study in the area of evaluation was the desire for a vocational assessment team that would travel from school to school.

Satellite Programs

There appeared to be no significant support for satellite programs for the visually impaired, although there was substantial support for those requesting consulting services, a resource center and for summer programming assistance.

Non-Typical/Multi-Handicapped

Services for the visually impaired/multi-handicapped appeared to be very strongly supported by local education agencies. For example, services to the deaf/blind received 69% of the respondents' support and 82% of the positive respondents' support. Services for mentally retarded/visually impaired youngsters received 72% and 85% support ratings while services for physically handicapped/visually impaired students received 69% ratings from all respondents and 82% from those responding positively.

Other Needs

Provision of Braille print and vocational education both received a fairly strong although not statistically significant support from the responding groups. It may be that many of the local districts receive materials from the Printing House for the Blind or are able to use the vocational services of local workshop programs. Other areas that were mentioned in this section were the provision of mobility training and regional consultation from state education department people.

Discussion

Although utilizing a limited number of respondents, it is felt that this survey can suggest significant direction in the planning of programs for sensorily impaired youngsters in the United States. We have significant problems in overbuilding at our state residential schools. We may also face the need to lay off staff, reduce services and modify programs. Rather than to dismantle these important long-term resources, a better choice might be to reorganize these staffs, redefine the facilities, and reprioritize the delivery of services.

Many of our less handicapped sensorily students are making adequate progress in the local school programs. For those not succeeding, it is an opportunity to receive an apporpriate educational program in an environment which can be managed to meet the individual specific needs established for a student.

A review of the results listed above shows that substantial efforts can be applied to the development of curriculum and outreach resources for students enrolled in LEA or intermediate education agency-based programs. Some interest has been demonstrated for

assistance in supervision of these programs. Local education agencies, particularly smaller ones, may welcome substantial assistance from a state-operated program for sensorily impaired youngsters. Management of the data base and assistance in finding an appropriate program might be all of the service that some LEAs would require.

Student evaluation is a very strong area of need in the sample selected. Most of the state-operated programs have personnel with substantial expertise in the areas of psychological evaluation, vision/hearing evaluation, educational evaluation, and behavioral evaluation. It could be very important to utilize these resources for the betterment of all sensorily impaired youngsters in a state.

Service to the non-typical/multi-handicapped sensorily impaired is a tremendous area for potential growth. The sensory handicapped child is difficult to manage educationally. When confounded with multiple impairments, these problems are often insoluable at the local education agency level. The best research tells us that an integrated program which controls both school and living environments helps to speed the development of necessary skills. It also provided a forum in which those skills can be generalized.

Summary

State-operated residential schools must review their operations. In this time of declining resources and increasing pressures on state budgets, efforts must be made to assure that these programs take their place as important alternatives. Local school districts need assistance in serving second and third priority students. The results of this survey presented to a group of special education administrators may assist in developing certain plans which assure that these schools are used appropriately.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY FORM

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Survey on
Services for the Blind

Please select the respon[illegible]which most reflects your needs.

Resources/Curriculum Development

Should a state school for the blind provide support services for visually impaired students in local or regional school programs?

◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ◯ Outreach teacher visits
- ◯ Centralized curriculum development
- ◯ Media resource production and/or distribution
- ◯ Assistance with I.E.P. developing
- ◯ Parent education programs
- ◯ Assistance in purchasing equipment and materials
- ◯ Other: _____

Supervision/Support

Should the state school for the blind provide technical supervision (teacher/program/curriculum) and support to local school programs?

◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ◯ Program evaluation assistance
- ◯ Teacher evaluation assistance
- ◯ Program location assistance
- ◯ Program coordination assistance
- ◯ Management of a statewide student data base
- ◯ Other: _____

Student Evaluation

Should the state school for the blind provide assistance [illegible] evaluation and evaluation support for students whether they attend the [illegible]te school or local programs?

◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ◯ Psychological evaluation
- ◯ Visual evaluation
- ◯ Educational evaluation
- ◯ Physical and occupational therapy evaluation
- ◯ Behavioral evaluation
- ◯ Other: _____

Satellite Programs

Should the state school for the blind organize, develop and evaluate a system of regionally located, centrally operated, day programs for visually impaired students?

◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, which should be offered?

◯ Program for visually impaired (0-21)
◯ Program for visually impaired students (preschool)
◯ Program for visually impaired students (elementary only)
◯ Program for visually impaired students (elementary and secondary)
◯ Program for visually impaired students (secondary only)
◯ Other: _____

Non-typical/Multi-handicapped

Should the state-operated residential program for blind students have a program to serve multiply handicapped visually impaired students?

◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, which should be offered?

◯ Visually impaired hearing impaired
◯ Visually impaired mentally impaired
◯ Visually impaired physically handicapped
◯ Visually impaired emotionally distrubed
◯ Visually impaired learning disabled
◯ Other: _____

Other Needs

◯ Braille/large print book production
◯ Vocational education
◯ Other: _____

My position: _____

Number of handicapped in my special education programs: _____

Number of visually impaired: _____ I have _____ classrooms for the visually impaired.

THANK YOU!

BK/jcmw
12/84

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Survey on
Services for the Deaf

Please select the response which most reflects your needs.

Resources/Curriculum Development

Should a state school for the deaf provide support services for hearing impaired students in local or regional school programs?

○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ○ Outreach teacher visits
- ○ Centralized curriculum development
- ○ Media resource production and/or distribution
- ○ Assistance with I.E.P. developing
- ○ Parent education programs
- ○ Assistance in purchasing equipment and materials
- ○ Other: _____

Supervision/Support

Should the state school for the deaf provide technical supervision (teacher/program/curriculum) and support to local school programs?

○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ○ Program evaluation assistance
- ○ Teacher evaluation assistance
- ○ Program location assistance
- ○ Program coordination assistance
- ○ Management of a statewide student data base
- ○ Other: _____

Student Evaluation

Should the state school for the deaf provide assistance in evaluation and evaluation support for students whether they attend the state school or local programs?

○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which services would you use?

- ○ Psychological evaluation
- ○ Audiological evaluation
- ○ Educational evaluation
- ○ Physical and occupation therapy evaluation
- ○ Behavioral evaluation
- ○ Other: _____

Satellite Programs

Should the state school for the deaf organize, develop and evaluate a system of regionally located, centrally operated, day programs for hearing impaired students?

○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which should be offered?

- ○ Program for hearing impaired (0-21)
- ○ Program for hearing impaired students (preschool)
- ○ Program for hearing impaired students (elementary only)
- ○ Program for hearing impaired students (elementary and secondary)
- ○ Program for hearing impaired students (secondary only)
- ○ Other: _____

Non-typical/Multi-handicapped

Should the state-operated residential program for deaf students have a program to serve multiply handicapped hearing impaired students?

○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which should be offered?

- ○ Hearing impaired visually impaired
- ○ Hearing impapred mentally handicapped
- ○ Hearing impaired physically handicapped
- ○ Hearing impaired emotionally disturbed
- ○ Hearing impaired learning disabled
- ○ Other: _____

Other Needs

- ○ Sign language/interpreter training
- ○ Vocational education
- ○ Other: _____

My position: _____

Number of handicapped in my special education program: _____

Number of hearing impaired: _____ I have _____ classrooms for the hearing impaired.

THANK YOU!

BK/jcmw
12/84

APPENDIX

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS - DEAF

Area	Per Cent of All Responses	Per Cent of Positive Responses
1. Resources/Curriculum		
a. Outreach teacher visits	56%	60%
b. Media resource lending	54%	56%
c. Parent education	63%	66%
d. Equipment and materials purchasing	54%	56%
-- Other strong responses:		
- Assistance in I.E.P. development	-	
- Community awareness programs		
- Social activity opportunities		
2. Supervision/Support		
a. Program coordination support	NS	56%
-- Other strong responses:		
- Program evaluation assistance		
- Program location assistance		
- Student data base management		
3. Student Evaluation		
a. Audiological evaluations	74%	86%
b. Psychological evaluations	62%	71%
c. Educational evaluations	68%	79%
d. Behavioral evaluations	NS	54%
-- Other strong response:		
- Vocational evaluation		
4. Satellite Program		
a. 0-21	NS	67%
5. Non-Typical/Multi-Handicapped		
a. Deaf/blind	68%	77%
b. Deaf/mentally retarded	74%	84%
c. Deaf/physically handicapped	68%	77%
d. Deaf/emotionally disturbed	74%	84%
e. Deaf/learning disabled	51%	58%
6. Other Significant Needs		
a. Sign language instruction - interpreter service		
b. Vocational education		
c. Transition from school to work training		

NS = not significant

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS - BLIND

Area	Per Cent of All Responses	Per Cent of Positive Responses
1. Resources/Curriculum		
a. Outreach teacher	64%	73%
b. Media resources	66%	76%
c. Assistance in I.E.P. development	50%	57%
d. Parent education	58%	67%
e. Assistance in purchasing	51%	59%
2. Supervision/Support		
a. Program evaluation assistance	52%	78%
b. Program coordination assistance	NS	59%
3. Student Evaluation		
a. Visual evaluation	56%	67%
b. Educational evaluation	58%	70%
4. Satellite Program		
a. 0-21	NS	55%
5. Non-Typical/Multi-Handicapped		
a. Visually-handicapped/deaf	69%	82%
b. Visually-handicapped/mentally retarded	72%	85%
c. Visually-handicapped/physically handicapped	69%	82%
d. Visually-handicapped/emotionally handicapped	68%	80%
e. Visually-handicapped/learning disabled	58%	69%
6. Other Significant Needs		
a. Braille and large print		
b. Vocational education		
c. Teacher inservice		

NS = not significant